

## **Water Power - August 1997**

Good morning and welcome to Atlanta. It is a special pleasure to be here with you this morning since not often in my present position do I get the opportunity to welcome a group to town with whom I speak the same language. As a civil engineer who specializes in geotechnical engineering, earthquake engineering and tunneling, I have worked on many projects that relate to waterpower and dams and I got that old sentimental feeling when I looked over your agenda.

Looking at my present post, some might conclude that I was not that good at my work because I managed to get kicked up far enough along the line to get me out of the kitchen. Yet I find I use the things I learned as a geotechnical engineer in my present job as President of Georgia Tech. Earthquakes, avalanches, inadequate foundation support, unanticipated rock in the tunnel face and excess pore pressure all have analogs in the university president's world of the faculty senate, politics, fund raising, political correctness and collegiate athletics. My dream keynote job is someday to spend an hour telling how all of these things are related. But, that is for later, not today!

We do hope you enjoy your stay in Atlanta and Georgia. We are a southern city and state known for hospitality, good food, and warm climes. Yet at the same time we are home to the Atlanta Braves, the best baseball team in the nation, we hosted the world for the 1996 Centennial Olympics, our state experienced the 2nd largest growth of high tech jobs in the nation for the last five years, recently we surpassed Virginia in population and now are the tenth largest state in the country, and we have been the fastest growing state east of the Rockies for four years in a row. The city of Atlanta has been identified as one of the top five best places to do business in the nation, has an airport that competes monthly as the busiest in the world, has three times more fiber optics trunk lines than New York City, and is home to 40 degree granting universities and colleges with over 100,000 students.

All of this is particularly notable since Atlanta has few of the normal features that underly commercial success in other great cities. We have no marine harbor, no major navigable river, no predominate industrial complex, and no natural resource such as a mineral deposit. The city is successful because it is a great place to live, there is access to a highly educated workforce, it is committed to diversity and has a drive that you will find no where else. The locals say that if Atlanta could suck as hard as it can blow, the Atlantic Ocean would be at the city limits.

Georgia Tech is particularly fortunate that Atlanta is also home to Georgia Power and its parent, the Southern Company. Atlanta's 1.7 million power customers are served by Georgia Power, one of Atlanta's most respected businesses. Georgia Power's parent company, The Southern Company is now the largest electronic power company in the United States and has customers worldwide.

both of these companies are among Atlanta's greatest civic citizens.

While many are struggling with the issue of how universities and industry can work together, one needs look no farther for the model than that between Georgia Power and Georgia Tech. Georgia Power is one of our major research supporters, and we operate one of their major research centers. Over 650 Georgia Tech graduates are employed at Georgia Power and they are our largest coop employer. In addition, Georgia Power funds four distinguished professorships and an endowed chair.

Georgia Tech is one of the nation's leading technological research institutions. Like Atlanta and Georgia Power we have characteristics that distinguish us from the competition. We are home to the nation's largest voluntary coop program and the 25th

largest university research enterprise. We graduate the largest number of engineering students in the nation, including the largest numbers of women and minorities counting all degree levels.

In national rankings, we have 15 programs cited in the top 20, and five ranked first or second. Our undergraduate students regularly claim title to the highest average SAT scores of any public university in the nation. I suppose by now you see I am proud of Georgia Tech and I hope you will drop by and see us. Our campus served as the Village for the 1996 Olympics, and is dramatically changed from what it was even a few years ago. I note one of your tours brings you to campus and would encourage you to consider it.

Let me wish you the best with the conference and for your stay in Atlanta. You are a group I could not be happier to see in my city and I hope you will return soon.

Thank you.